

The PSC Pulse

PSC COMMISSIONERS TRAVEL THE STATE TO ANNOUNCE EMC'S EXPANSION INTO BROADBAND SERVICE



Since the passage of Senate Bill 2 in 2019, rural broadband projects have been announced in every corner of the state. Ultimately, these projects will serve more than 178,000 homes and businesses in rural Georgia. That includes 44 counties and totals more than \$491 million of investment by local governments, state partners and 16 Georgia EMCs.



Commissioner **Lauren "Bubba" McDonald** speaks at Satilla Rural Electric Membership Corporation.

Over the past few months, PSC Commissioners have been proud to attend announcement ceremonies at several EMCs that are getting into the broadband business.

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Commissioner Shaw in Orlando

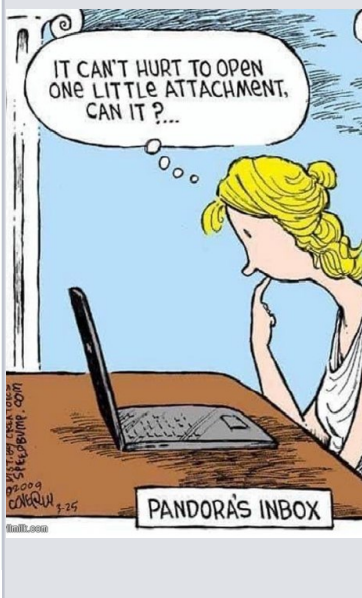
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In addition to the many recent announcements of EMCs entering the broadband business, **Commissioner Jason Shaw** also spoke at the Georgia Telecommunications Association convention in Orlando.

Among his topics: the need to increase access to reliable high-speed broadband service, especially in rural areas.

**Don't Forget to
Keep Cyber-Safe**



Commissioner **Tricia Pridemore** joined the Governor at Washington EMC. Pictured with Pridemore is the Governor's now-famous sign language translator, David Cowan.

allows one more avenue to Georgia's attempt to provide everyone in the state with reliable internet service.

Gov. Brian Kemp has repeatedly expressed his desire to see rural parts of Georgia catch up economically and technologically with the urban and suburban parts of the state.

"Over the years, I have heard from countless Georgians about the difficulties they face accessing reliable high-speed internet," Gov. Kemp said. "When the COVID-19 pandemic hit,

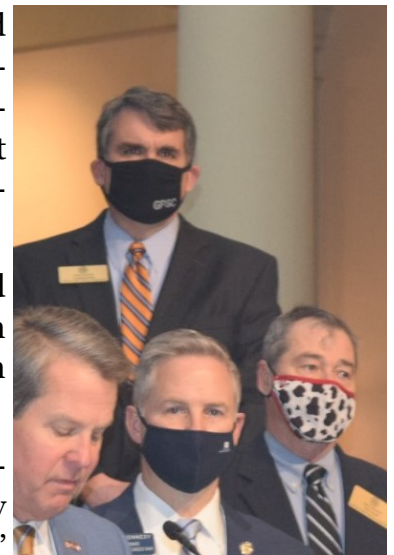


Commissioner **Jason Shaw** at Middle Georgia EMC.

Senate Bill 2 gave the Public Service Commission compliance authority over EMCs that want to provide broadband.

Rural parts of Georgia have been struggling to catch up with the world's reliance on a cyber run economy. Businesses have difficulty keeping pace, hospitals are finding it hard to introduce telemedicine in rural areas that are geographically isolated and school children in rural Georgia often travel to nearby fast-food restaurants to access the Wi-Fi they need to complete homework assignments.

Allowing EMCs to expand their existing infrastructure to provide broadband service to their rural customers al-



lowers one more avenue to Georgia's attempt to provide everyone in the state with reliable internet service. Gov. Kemp said. "When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the necessity of high-speed broadband access was driven home to all of us. This is no longer an optional service for many families — it is an essential need that impacts kitchen tables from Hahira to Hiawassee."

Commissioners **Chuck Eaton** and **Tim Echols** at the Capitol for the announcement of broadband initiative by Central Georgia EMC and Southern Rivers Energy

COMMISSIONER PRIDEMORE GETS A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF COBB EMC SOLAR PANELS



Yes, the person in the tan coat and white helmet in the upper right portion of this picture is **Commissioner Tricia Pridemore**, who braved a bucket truck ride to view the rooftop solar array at Cobb EMC. The solar panels are designed to power the entire campus during disaster recovery.

COMMS. ECHOLS, MCDONALD, AND PRIDEMORE ATTEND RIBBON CUTTING FOR NEW GREYSTONE POWER HEADQUARTERS

GreyStone Power Corp. has opened its new Paulding County headquarters. GreyStone has been at its current site since 1963, and its last major expansion was in 1990, when the cooperative served around 50,000 members. Since then, the co-op's membership has more than doubled, along with the operating revenue and miles of lines.

GreyStone Power is a member-owned cooperative providing electricity and related services to more than 118,000 members in eight counties, including portions of Paulding, Douglas, Fulton, Cobb, Carroll, Bartow, Fayette and Coweta counties.



NEW MICROGRID AT GEORGIA TECH



Commissioner **Lauren “Bubba” McDonald** was present for the opening celebration of a new 1.4 megawatt microgrid at Georgia Tech.

The microgrid, in midtown Atlanta, will help power the local area and will provide Georgia Power with insight into how smart energy management systems can achieve optimal energy use. The installation includes fuel cells, battery storage, diesel generators and a natural gas generator, and it is adaptive to new and additional distributed energy resources.

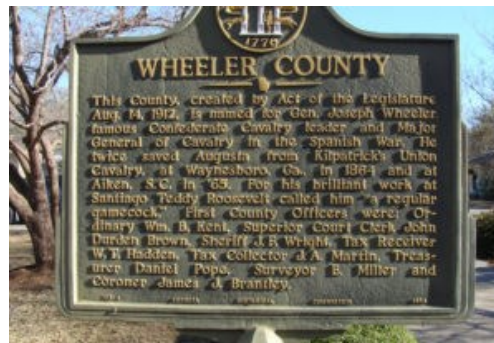
It also will provide teaching and learning opportunities for Georgia Tech professors and students.

The Public Service Commission approved the microgrid in 2019 as part of Georgia Power’s Integrated Resource Plan.

COMMISSION APPROVES GAS PROJECTS FOR HALL, FLOYD, LOWNDES, CHATHAM AND WHEELER COUNTIES

As part of the Public Service Commission’s mission to distribute funds from the Economic Development Tariff and the Universal Service Fund (USF), the Commission has approved several new natural gas projects. The projects are expected to help development initiatives that will create jobs and add millions in economic development to several Georgia counties.

USF projects approved by the commission include \$1.17 million to route new gas lines that will service Kubota Manufacturing of America Corporation for its new testing facility near the current manufacturing plant in Hall County. Also under USF funding was more than \$123,000 for gas service to a new middle school in Floyd County.

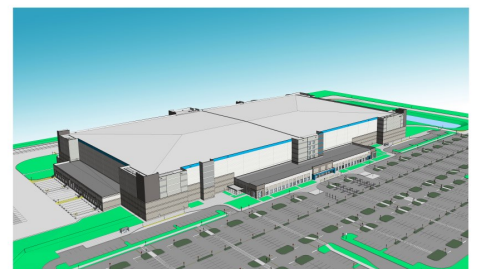


Projects funding by the Economic Development Tariff, known as ECON-1 Tariff, include \$440,000 for gas service to a new LaQuinta Hotel near Interstate 75 and Shiloh Road in Lowndes County. In Wheeler County, \$2.65 million will fund gas line service to T.C. Logging where a new sawmill is being built. The project will hire 50 people. **Commissioner Tricia Pridemore** pointed out that 50 jobs in Wheeler County is “a game changer.”

Finally, \$7.57 million was approved to route gas lines to the new Amazon Fulfillment Center under construction in Chatham County. That project is expected to employ 1,000 Georgians through a \$250 million Amazon investment in the area.

The USF was created after natural gas deregulation in Georgia. The Commission set up the fund for each participating distribution company to ensure gas is available for sale by marketers to firm retail customers within a territory certificated to each marketer. This enables the distribution companies to extend and expand facilities and service and to assist low-income residential consumers in times of emergency as determined by the Commission.

In 2017, the Commission approved Atlanta Gas Light’s ECON-1 Tariff for large economic development projects with parameters based on customer class, capital investment, new jobs created and new gas load. The approved tariff allows funding of up to \$15 million per year for Econ-1 Tariff projects. AGL is required to file any proposed projects with the Commission for approval.



Artist rendering of the Amazon Fulfillment Center under construction in Pooler.

Source: Georgia Department of Economic Development

COMMISSION VOTES TO REDUCE LANDLINE UAF FEE

The Georgia Public Service Commission voted unanimously in June to reduce a landline phone fee as a 10-year statutory program sunsets.

In 2011, the PSC began implementing a new state law that required telecommunications carriers to reduce the rates they charge each other to complete long distance calls. The practical effect of the law was to bring the costs for in-state long distance calls in line with the costs for out-of-state long distance calls. Prior to implementation by the PSC, it would often cost significantly more to place an in-state long distance call than to call across the country using a landline.

Having now fully implemented this program over a period of 10 years, the PSC voted unanimously on Tuesday to reduce the Universal Access Fund (UAF) fee by 37.5% percent to account for the sunset program. The fee will drop from 6.00% to 3.75% on monthly bills beginning July 1, 2021.

“The bottom line is: business and individual customers in Georgia will see a savings on their phone bills,” said PSC Commissioner **Tricia Pridemore**, the chair of the PSC Telecommunications Committee. “This is welcome news for anyone with a landline phone.”

A \$50 phone bill would be reduced by slightly more than \$1 per month under the reduced fee, resulting in more than \$13 in annual savings. Although actual numbers are difficult to calculate, it is estimated that Georgia has about 1.7 million landline phones.



COMMISSIONER ECHOLS NAMED ‘INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR’

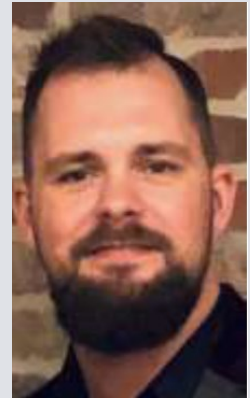


The Smart Grid Customer Education Symposium chose Georgia Public Service Commission **Vice Chairman Tim Echols** as its “Innovator of the Year” during its 2021 Game Changers Awards.

This is another of several honors for Commissioner Echols who has previously been named the Solar Architect for Georgia, part of the Dynamic Duo for EVs and received the Nuclear Trailblazer award from United States Nuclear Infrastructure Council. Echols’ has long been a champion

of solar energy, electric vehicles, nuclear power, and customer rate savings through self-education of home energy usage.

COMMISSION HIRES NEW PIPELINE SAFETY INSPECTOR & EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT



Brant Sweat comes to the PSC as a pipeline safety inspector. Previously, he worked as a gas construction supervisor for the City of Covington.

He went to Newton County High School before obtaining a technical certificate as an electrical line worker apprentice.



Straight off the campaign of former U.S. Sen. David Perdue, where she worked as a finance assistant, **Amy Hicks** has been hired as **Commissioner Tricia Pridemore’s** new executive assistant.

Amy has a degree in public relations and communications from Georgia Southern University.

JADA BROCK MAKES HISTORY AT GEORGIA TECH

Operations Support Director **Jada Brock** was one of three women to graduate with the Georgia Tech Online Masters of Science in Cybersecurity degree this spring. The three are the first women to graduate from the program. To put the impressiveness of this fete in perspective, Georgia Tech was rated as the best cybersecurity school in the country by U.S. News & World Report this year.

With a world ever more reliant on Internet-based operations, online data storage and just about all day-to-day work utilizing the Web, cybersecurity is becoming more and more necessary to the stability of our economy and our nation.

At the PSC, where we work directly with energy infrastructure, having a guru in the field who just graduated from a nationally renowned program is a welcome addition. Anyone who waited in a long line to buy gasoline after the Colonial Pipeline hack understand why we are proud of Jada's most recent accomplishment.



SALLIE TANNER PROMOTED TO H.R. DIRECTOR

Twenty years ago, fresh to Atlanta from her native Murrells Inlet, S.C., **Sallie Tanner** came to the PSC to start work as then-Commissioner Stan Wise's executive assistant.



This year, Sallie has a new position at the PSC as the Commission's Human Resources Director.

Sallie's first stint as a Georgian came while getting her political science degree from the University of Georgia. Afterward, she returned home and worked in hotel management and ran a health food store before coming to Atlanta.

Her most recent job was working as **Commissioner Tricia** Pridemore's executive assistant.

Sallie has been married to Steven for 14 years and has an 11-year-old son, George.

MONIQUE ANDREWS PROMOTED TO HEAD CONSUMER AFFAIRS

Monique Andrews has returned to Consumer Affairs, where she began her career at the PSC. This time she manages the department.

Monique went to Clark Atlanta University, then started at the PSC as a switchboard operator in 1999. After receiving a degree in Computer Information Systems, she moved to IT/Facilities Support in 2005.

Through the years, Monique stayed in touch with her colleagues in Consumer Affairs, enjoying many celebrations for birthdays, wedding showers, retirements, etc. When the Consumer Affairs manager position opened, she said she felt it was destiny.



She plans to begin outreach programs to educate the consumers of Georgia that the PSC is here to help them and to be a speaking voice for the consumers of GA.

**HAPPY
ANNIVERSARY!**



5 YEARS

Benjamin Deitchman

Tom Krause

Marilyn Morris

10 YEARS

Tim Echols

20 YEARS

Reece McAlister

Sallie Tanner

William Upshaw

RETIREMENT



25 YEARS

Deborah Flanagan started her career in state government in Connecticut before working at the Florida Public Service Commission. She was hired as the Georgia Public Service Commission executive director shortly after the Olympics came to Atlanta in 1996.

Deborah holds an MBA and is a CPA. At the PSC, she regularly crunched numbers and got into the gritty details of commission work. Even in retirement, she will continue to work for the PSC as a part-time consultant.

Outside of work, Deborah stays busy with her two college-age daughters.

Claudette Willingham has retired and moved to Savannah. She came to the PSC in 1999, during gas deregulation, a very busy time of rapid change.



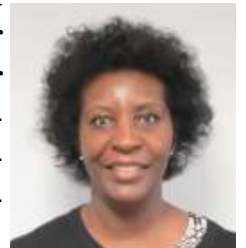
30 YEARS

Claudette worked in Consumer Affairs, then as a Commissioner's executive assistant before returning to Consumer Affairs, the department she was running when she retired.

Monique Andrews recently received a postcard from Claudette: "I miss all of you!" she wrote. "I am enjoying retirement. I made the move to Savannah. I love it!"

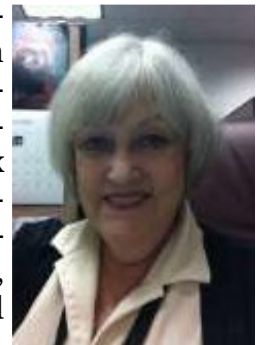
Director of Internal Consultants **Pandora Epps** retired from the PSC after 34 years, having started when the Vogtle 1 and 2 reviews were still ongoing. She touched just about every major case at the PSC in her tenure.

Allison Morris, who worked with Pandora for 13 years, summed up her experience by saying: "Pandora is the epitome of what a great co-worker or great supervisor should be. She is supportive, patient, hard-working, and extremely professional. She projects the high standards that she expects of others, and in being around her, you can't help but follow her lead."



34 YEARS

Dona Cucich started at the PSC as a temp for two years before becoming a permanent employee. She worked as Commissioner Lauren "Bubba" McDonald's executive assistant for six years before returning to Consumer Affairs, where she had started.



25 YEARS

Outside of the PSC, Donna (who has a BA in music from Agnes Scott College) did non-professional shows with Onstage Atlanta. She also sang at Decatur Presbyterian Church for 50 years — even singing a few times with Commissioner McDonald.

COMMISSION CALENDAR

August 2021

Administrative Session—8/3
Committee Meetings—8/12
Administrative Session—8/17

September 2021

Committee Meetings—9/2
Labor Day Holiday—9/6
Administrative Session—9/7
Committee Meetings—9/16
Administrative Session—9/21
Committee Meetings—9/30

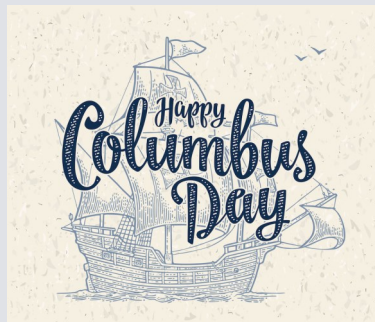
October 2021

Administrative Session—10/5
Columbus Day Holiday—10/11
Committee Meetings—10/14
Administrative Sessions—10/19
Committee Meetings—10/28

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS



Monday, Sept. 6



Monday, Oct. 11



Thursday, Nov. 11

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COMMISSIONERS

Chuck Eaton, Chairman
Tim G. Echols, Vice Chair
Lauren “Bubba” McDonald
Tricia Pridemore
Jason Shaw

The Public Information Office publishes The PSC Pulse for the Georgia Public Service Commission. Information for The PSC Pulse should be sent to the attention of **Tom Krause, Public Information Officer** or **Lynn Page, Newsletter Editor**.

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